measures required urgently to improve exports. Interest on export credit has been reduced by one percentage point. It has been decided to set up an Export Promotion Board to resolve inter-Ministerial issues and to give a national priority thrust to export efforts.

Procurement Target for Non-Basmati Rice and its Export

656.SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the quality of non-basmati rice expected to be exported during the year 1997-98;

(b) whether it is a fact that the procurement target for non-basmati rice for the year 1996-97 has fallen short: and

(c) if so, the reasons for non-basmati rice being allowed to be exported inspite of its shortage in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) The non-basmati rice exported would be mainly of fine and superfine varieties.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Proposal to Encourage Tea Plantation in non-Traditional Areas in Uttar Pradesh

657. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH SURYA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to encourage tea plantation in non-traditional areas;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government have taken steps to promote traditional plantation sites in U.P.;

(d) whether Government have received any proposal from Uttar Pradesh to develop non-traditional sites for tea; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) With a view to augment production of tea and given the constraints on availability of land suitable for tea cultivation in the traditional areas, Government has been encouraging setting up of tea plantations in non-traditional areas where land suitable for tea cultivation is available.

(c) Yes. Sir.

(d) and (e) Following project proposals for financial assistance have been received by the Tea Board in March, 1997, from the Government of Uttar Pradesh, for development of tea plantations in 'non-traditional areas of the State:-

(i) Nucleus tea project at Kausani in Kumaon region with an outlay of Rs. 564.80 lakh.

(ii) Nucleus tea project at Nauti in Garhwal region with an outlay of Rs. 558.15 lakh.

The project proposals have been accepted in principle by the Board, subject to fulfilment of certain requirements before sanction and funding. This is being followed up by the Tea Board with the Government of Uttar Pradesh.

Ban of Export of Granite

658. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken decision to impose ban on the export of granite:

(b) if so, since when; and

(c) the reasons for imposing such ban?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH) (a) No. Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Talks with Export Organisations to check the Declining Trend of Exports

659. SHRI S.M. KRISHA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian exports